

***California
Commission on Teacher Credentialing***

***Meeting of
July 10-11, 2002***

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER: **PERF – 1**

COMMITTEE: **Performance Standards**

TITLE: **Single Subject Assessments for Teaching (SSAT): Proposed
Contract Amendment**

 X **Action**

 Information

Strategic Plan Goal:

**Goal 1: Promote educational excellence through the preparation and certification of
professional educators**

- Sustain high quality standards for the performance of credential candidates

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**Single Subject Assessments for Teaching (SSAT);
Proposed Contract Amendment**

Professional Services Division

June 4, 2002

Executive Summary

This item recommends that the Commission amend the SSAT contract with National Evaluation Systems, Inc. (NES), increasing the total contractual amount by \$1,434,949 to fund administrations of the SSAT through June of 2004. This request is made because of larger than anticipated numbers of examinees during the first two years of the SSAT administration contract. Even though this raises the maximum threshold of the contract, NES will only be paid based on the actual number of examinees.

Fiscal Impact Summary

This amendment will allow the Commission to spend more from the Test Development and Administration Account (TDAA) on the SSAT contract, as needed due to a larger volume of examinees. Increased expenses, however, will be compensated for by increased revenue from examinee fees.

Policy Issue to be Decided

Should the SSAT contract be amended to make \$1,434,949 in additional funds available to compensate the testing agency?

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Commission adopt the contract amendment summarized below.

- Contract Number: TCC-9041
- Contractor: National Evaluation Systems, Inc.
- Contracting Period: October 2, 2000, to August 31, 2004
- Purpose of Contract: Complete the administration of the SSAT
- Proposed Amendment: Increase the total contract amount by \$1,434,949, from \$1,800,000 to \$3,234,949
- Source of Funding: Examinee fees

Single Subject Assessments for Teaching (SSAT): Proposed Contract Amendment

Professional Services Division

June 4, 2002

Background

The Commission issues Single Subject Teaching Credentials that authorize the teaching of specific subjects in departmentalized classrooms, typically found in secondary schools. One of the requirements for earning a Single Subject Teaching Credential is verification of subject matter competence. Prospective teachers have two alternative ways to meet this requirement: (a) completion of a Commission-accredited program of subject matter preparation for teaching in the subject area, or (b) passage of the Commission-approved subject matter examinations. California Education Code §44281 requires the Commission to administer subject matter examinations and assessments for the purpose of ensuring minimum levels of subject matter knowledge for teachers who take the exams in lieu of completing approved subject matter programs.

One of the examination programs used for verification of subject matter competence is the Single Subject Assessments for Teaching (SSAT). The current four-year contract to develop and administer the SSAT was awarded to National Evaluation Systems, Inc. (NES) in May, 2000 on the basis of a competitive bidding process. The contract calls for four administrations of the SSAT each year and the contract will expire on August 31, 2004. The SSAT contract established \$1,800,000 as the total amount available to reimburse NES. SSAT administration expenses through the April 2002 testing date total \$1,526,949 with nine test administration dates remaining for the contract.

Funding for administration of the SSAT is fully supported through fees paid by examinees as required under Education Code §44298. The examinee test fee covers the Commission's costs related to the SSAT, as well as the administrative duties performed by NES. NES is responsible for collecting these fees and submitting the total amount to the Commission. The Commission then pays NES a specific amount per examinee. The amount paid to NES is based on a sliding scale related to the number of examinees who take the SSAT.

Rationale for the Amendment to the Contract

This proposed amendment would increase the amount of the contract by \$1,434,949 based upon larger than anticipated volumes of examinees. SSAT administration costs established in the contract are based upon numbers of examinees. The total amount of the contract is determined through projections of examinee volumes considering trends in examinee volumes for past years.

At the time that the contract for administration of the SSAT exams was established in 2000, the impact of initiatives developed by the Governor to assist in the recruitment of new candidates to the teaching profession was unknown. Additionally, the development of new examinations to replace the SSAT exams was delayed. The administration of those new tests, the California Subject Exams for Teachers (CSET), will begin in January 2003. Therefore, while examinee volumes were expected to decrease with the administration of new exams, the delay in development of the exams in conjunction with the increase in examinees based upon recruitment initiatives resulted in much higher examinee volumes

and expenses than projected for the contract. Examinee volumes during the 2000-2001 testing year were approximately 15% higher than anticipated for that year. Through the April 2002 SSAT administration, examinee volumes for 2001-02 are up nearly 40% compared to last year.

Projected Costs

The current twenty-five SSAT exams are comprised of three different test types: (1) multiple-choice only tests, (2) combined multiple-choice/constructed-response tests, and (3) combined multiple-choice/constructed response language tests. The SSAT subject areas and test types are as follows:

Type 1: Multiple-Choice Only Tests

Art, Biology, Chemistry, French, General Science, Literature and English Language, Mathematics, Music, Physical Education, Physics, Spanish, and Social Science

Type 2: Multiple-Choice/Constructed-Response Tests

Agriculture, Business, Geoscience, Health Science, Home Economics, Industrial and Technology Education, and Preliminary Educational Technology

Type 3: Multiple-Choice/Constructed-Response Language Tests

German, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Punjabi, Russian, and Vietnamese

SSAT exams for English, math, sciences, and social science will be replaced by CSET exams after June of 2003. SSAT exams for art, languages other than English, music, physical education, and preliminary educational technology will be replaced after June 2004. Considering that exams for these subjects will be phased out, Table 1 shows the volumes of examinees for each type of SSAT exam that staff projects for the remainder of the contract.

Table 1
Projected SSAT Examination Volumes

Exam Type	June 2002	2002-03	2003-04	Total
Type 1	2,130	9,550	2,315	13,995
Type 2	560	2,200	2,440	5,200
Type 3	85	100	115	300
Total	2,775	11,850	4,870	19,495

NES is compensated at different rates for each of the three types of exams due to the different assessment formats. The rates are established in the contract and based upon examinee volumes. Based upon the projected volumes shown in Table 1 and the associated contract costs, the total expenses for the remainder of the contract are projected to be \$1,708,000. The current balance of the contract is \$273,051. Subtracting that amount from the projected expenses for the remainder of the contract leaves an amount of \$1,434,949 by which the contract will need to be amended. NES will only be paid based on the actual number of examinees as specified in the contract.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Commission approve an amendment to the 2000-2004 SSAT contract to increase the total contract amount by \$1,434,949 to \$3,234,949 to compensate NES for SSAT administrations for the remainder of the contract.

